

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 9, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Simas, Commissioners Bishop, Glass, Jokinen, Lampe, Tanaka

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Larrivee

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Mattar, Kristi Oosterveen, Franz Loewenherz, Kevin McDonald, Mike Ingram, Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Simas who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Jokinen, who arrived at 6:32 p.m., and Commissioner Larrivee, who was excused.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Capital Programming Coordinator Kristi Oosterveen explained that the TIP is updated annually. It is then provided to the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Puget Sound Regional Council and grants can be applied for for projects on the list. The TIP includes projects from the Capital Investment Program, the Transportation Facilities Plan, other long-range plans and studies, and regional projects. The six-year plan is a list of projects the city would complete given the money to do them all.

Ms. Oosterveen said the recommendation of the Commission will be forwarded to the City Council for final approval. The TIP is slated to be in front the Council on June 3.

Chair Simas opened the public hearing.

Mr. David Plummer, 14414 NE 14th Street, proposed the deletion of 32 projects from the proposed TIP and provided the Commission with a letter identifying the projects. He said the total price tag for the 32 projects is some \$440 million. The projects are unnecessary, expensive, and have no relationship to the transportation needs for the city.

Mr. Bruce Nurse with Kemper Development Company, 575 Bellevue Square, expressed the interest of the company in exploring the feasibility of a NE 6th Street subsurface arterial, noting that the project was included in the TIP as unfunded. He said Kemper Development Company is looking at the feasibility of a first phase of the project that would involve the expansion of Lincoln Square. Kemper Development Company does not support the general dumbing down of transportation projects. The city needs capacity both inside and outside of the central business district as Bellevue continues to grow. In Section II of the proposed TIP there are some ten projects that are in the downtown, and Kemper Development Company supports them all as important. The bus rapid transit project on I-405 is listed in Section IV as part of the I-405 master plan; even though it is desperately needed, none of the transit agencies are planning increased service, which is very distressing. Midblock crossings are mentioned in the TIP as well but before allowing them they should be carefully analyzed given that they can be vehicle capacity killers. On-street parking, something that is not on the TIP list, goes hand-in-hand with midblock crossings as having a negative impact on capacity.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak during the public hearing, Chair Simas closed the public hearing.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Senior transportation planner Franz Lowenherz informed the Commission that the market-drive strategies report was presented to the Council on May 6. He said staff reviewed with the Council how the report represents a logical extension of the outreach process and technical analysis. King County Metro staff attended the Council meeting as well and reviewed their agency's financial outlook and the real possibility of a near-term service reduction. In response to the presentation, the Council voted 6-0 to advocate before the state legislature for a local option to fund transit, but only if the funding alternative is decided by voters. The market strategies issue will once again be before the Council on May 20 where their endorsement will be sought to leverage the upcoming discussions with King County Metro and Sound Transit.

Mr. Loewenherz said the draft transmittal letter is a reflection of the feedback and analysis to date. The basic message is that strategies have been developed that lead to the concept of abundant access, and the city should invest in connections that are cost-effective and which primarily are associated with activity centers. If trade-offs are necessary, the consequence of that position is that reductions will be made in areas with less density where service is less productive. The approach is consistent with King County Metro's strategic plan and service guidelines and will position the city to safeguard the economic vitality of the activity centers.

Commissioner Bishop voiced concern over the fact that the language and the strategies in the transmittal does not emphasize hardly at all the dominant market share of any transit system, which is the home-to-work trips. He said of the six identified strategies, only the words in the title of the fourth strategy and the first six words of that strategy even mention home-to-work trips or the fact that commute needs are even important. Meeting the commute needs should be paramount; everything else should be in support of that. Commissioner Bishop said during a

long conversation with Mr. Loewenherz earlier in the day he became convinced that he and staff are on the same page and that the disagreement was only over semantics. At the end of the day when the capital element and policy changes are made, the opportunity to emphasize the primary function of the transit system should not be missed. Bellevue's transit plan needs to be a plan focused on serving Bellevue and its commercial centers and having connections with the outside world where those who work in Bellevue live, and that demands a system that can handle the peak commute.

Commissioner Glass said it appeared to him that the plan will result in the loss of some of the mostly empty buses that circle many of Bellevue's suburban neighborhoods, and replacement with buses that will serve the activity centers. It makes sense to put scarce resources where they will do the most good. He said he agrees with the direction of the plan and supports the transmittal memo.

Commissioner Jokinen concurred.

Commissioner Tanaka agreed that addressing the commuter peak hour needs is and will continue to be critical. He pointed out, however, that the plan speaks to a transit system, not a peak-hour system, and seeks to strike a reasonable balance. The language of the transmittal is broad enough to encompass the needs. During the various workshops that took place there was recognition of the fact that with limited funds it is imperative to prioritize the allocation of the funds. The transmittal memo does not disregard the needs of commuters during the peak hours in favor of recognizing other needs in the community. He said he would make no changes to the language of the memo.

Commissioner Lampe noted his general agreement with the language of the transmittal. He said it highlights making connections easy and attractive, focuses on high-ridership markets, and talks about the need to maximize the return on the investment of limited resources. He proposed revising the last part of the first paragraph of the transmittal to read "...for people who live, work, shop and play in the City of Bellevue." There was consensus to make the change as proposed.

Chair Simas voiced the notion that truly everyone is on the same page. He said the document is a broad overview of the need for a robust overall transportation system. The document is not specific, but it is not intended to be specific.

A motion to approve the transmittal and present it to the City Council was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tanaka and it carried unanimously.

Design Division Manager Mike Mattar provided the Commissioners with copies of a memo from Senior Planner Kevin McDonald regarding questions raised by Commissioner Bishop about the modeling projections for the downtown transportation plan.

Commissioner Bishop said the fundamental issue is that the BKR model is kicking out a

projection for transit ridership in downtown Bellevue that is extraordinarily high. The growth rate works out to be nine percent per year, something that is unheard of in the transit industry. Two to three percent is considered high. There are four major elements to a model, and the program involves thousands of algorithms. Mode split is one of the major elements and that is driven by an algorithm concerning parking costs; where parking costs are driven up, transit ridership is driven up. Commissioner Bishop stressed that he believes transportation modeling; it has been used for many years and has been tailored to specifically Bellevue. He said the parking algorithm used in the BKR model is the same used by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and that could explain why that agency historically has overestimated transit trips. The problem lies in the fact that an overestimation of transit trips is an underestimation of vehicle trips. He recently asked staff to respond to the potential for sensitivity analysis. To go to 57,000 daily transit passenger trips means the mode split increases from three percent to nine percent. If the increase, however, is only six percent, the delta would go back into vehicles, which could in turn force some intersections to substantially degrade.

Commissioner Bishop noted that Traffic Analysis Zone 11 is where Bellevue Square is located. The data shows zero short- and long-parking in 2010 and in 2030 it shows there will be a charge for parking. Most zones show assumed rates for parking, and not just in the downtown.

Commissioner Lampe agreed that bold assumptions are used in the model and some sort of sensitivity might be helpful to see what it would do to level of service. He said he could not quite follow why the parking rates would increase from \$7.36 to \$27.93, almost a fourfold increase, in light of the fact that the annual increase is noted to be only 1.5 percent. Commissioner Bishop explained that the 1.5 percent is on top of the \$27.93 and represents the inflation assumption. At that rate, all-day parking would be between \$35.00 and \$40.00. Commissioner Lampe suggested that increasing parking costs by fourfold will drive a lot of people out of their cars.

Commissioner Bishop said he had the sense that the assumed parking rates are the biggest culprit driving the increase in transit ridership. The analysis should include a model run that assumes 25 percent or so of the anticipated transit rider does not materialize to see what that will do to the rest of the planning. If the sensitivity is really small, there is no issue.

Chair Simas asked how difficult it would be to comply with Commissioner Bishop's request. Mr. McDonald said he was not able to answer that question but would be willing to ask Judy Clark, the city's modeler. He explained that parking costs are only assigned to long-term commuter parking, not retail or residential parking. He added that in addition to parking costs, other factors influence whether or not commuters choose to drive rather than use transit, including gas prices, employer parking subsidies, and the supply of parking. To isolate parking costs for a sensitivity test may not return an accurate response.

Commissioner Lampe suggested that the assumed nine percent per year increase in transit ridership is what should be lowered for the sensitivity test. Mr. McDonald pointed out that mode share is a result of the model, not an input, and a number of factors affect mode share. The 57,000 daily transit passenger trips includes boardings and alightings. During the peak

hour, for which levels of services are typically looked at, the transit number is around 15,000 of the 57,000. Even if a sensitivity test created a fairly substantial change in the 14,000 projected transit riders, the level of service changes for certain intersections is not likely to negatively impact the overall function of the downtown network.

Chair Simas said the comments made by Commissioner Bishop had gotten his attention, particularly with concern to parking rates. He said he would like to know how they were determined. He said he also would like more information about the inflation rates built into the model.

Commissioner Glass commented that Bellevue competes with Seattle and with other suburban cities for employers. Urban parking rates are a major factor for employers, and if the other suburban cities do not elect to increase their rates, Bellevue is unlikely to follow Seattle's lead because to do so would negatively impact the city's ability to compete in the region. Parking rates likely will rise over time, but probably not as quickly as the model indicates.

There was agreement to seek some answers from Ms. Clark.

Mr. Mattar informed the Commissioners that the East Link final design open house for the downtown section is slated for May 16 and for the south Bellevue section on May 30.

Mr. Mattar also reminded the Commissioners about the city's Spring Forward expo on May 24. He said booklets for all capital projects and initiatives have been developed.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL,
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None

6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Lampe reported that he attended the Spring Forward tour and the downtown walking tour sponsored by the city.

7. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Will Knedlik, president of Eastside Rail Now and a regular transit user, noted the support of his organization for mass transit. The primary focus of the organization is commuter rail. Eastside Rail Now believes that a sound transit master plan for Bellevue will be critical to Sound Transit planning for the Eastside. Such a plan will not be possible, either logically or legally, if the core data is falsified and if central claims are utterly nonsensical, yet that is what the Commission has in front of it that is serving as the basis for the transmittal memo just approved by the Commission. Speed is highlighted as central to the development of a transit network that moves toward attracting more patrons who take transit by choice. It is claimed that transit saves time. Dick Ford and Claudia Balducci of the Transportation Policy Board of the Puget Sound Regional Council have spent the last two years making absolutely clear that a transit trip from Location A to Location B on average takes twice as long transportation by

private automobile. If that is saving time, it is doing so in a universe of negative numbers. It is, however, the challenging reality of what transit is about. In going to a system having more and more connections, travel times will lengthen rather than decrease. The Commission cannot, therefore, premise a recommendation to the Council by simply defying logic, reality and the facts. Study after study has made absolutely clear that given the present level of transit usage, and given the increasing efficiency of cars, transit creates more greenhouse gasses per trip per passenger than private vehicles do, and as more and more electric cars come online that truth will become even more evident. What the Commission needs is accurate representations of the basis for all claims. Eastside Rail Now is in favor of transit, but wants it developed based on facts not fantasies. He said it was his intent to make a public disclosure request to the city to provide the core documents upon which the claims are made. If documents have been used that are contrary to what the Puget Sound Regional Council staff and Claudia Balducci as chair of the Transportation Policy Board have developed, people need to know that. A close look at the saves money and reduces foreign oil dependency and saves energy claims on which the transit plan rests are in fact falsified and utterly nonsensical.

Mr. Bruce Nurse, Kemper Development Company, 575 Bellevue Square, called attention to the penultimate page of the materials submitted by staff to the Commission regarding the Comprehensive Plan update agenda item. He noted that in the middle of the page was an update of figures and tables addressing a change in the level of service capacity for intersections in the Wilburton Mobility Management Area from a volume to capacity ratio of 0.90 to 0.95. Kemper Development Company emphatically opposes such a change and in fact recommends going from 0.90 to 0.85 instead. During the Bel-Red corridor study, Kemper Development Company testified in support of a change to 0.85, but the Commission went ahead with the 0.90. The higher the number, the greater the level of congestion during peak hours as measured under the Traffic Standards Code and as measured by the intersections within the Mobility Management Area. Increasing congestion was clearly not the intent of the Council in established the Bel-Red corridor study principles which held that the corridor would not compete with the downtown in terms of magnitude and development, including traffic. If traffic congestion is allowed to increase in the corridor, it could become a gridlock wall dividing east Bellevue from west Bellevue. The congestion issue is what triggered the appeal to the master development plan for the Bel-Red area. Kemper Development Company intends to follow the issue beyond the Commission all the way to the Council.

8. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Tanaka. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and it carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program

Ms. Oosterveen reiterated that the Transportation Improvement Program is updated annually and is not revenue constrained. Essentially it contains every possible project the city would

construct if time and resources were no issue. She noted that the far right column of the matrix listed total project cost, including unsecured funds, and stressed that the only funds secured for projects on the list were from the Capital Investment Program (CIP). The "other funding" column lists grants that have been obtained for the CIP projects.

With regard to the 32 projects Mr. Plummer highlighted for deletion, 14 are in the CIP, 12 are in the Transportation Facilities Plan, four are alternative analysis projects, and two are regional projects. She said the recommendation of the staff was to retain all of the projects in the matrix.

Ms. Oosterveen said the subsurface arterial project highlighted by Mr. Nurse was included on the list for consideration if funds became available for further analysis. Given that the city is not in the middle of a budget process, it is conceivable that the project will come back again. With regard to on-street parking, there is a group within traffic management that looks at on-street parking opportunities.

Commissioner Glass asked if there are any negative implications to having a long and expensive TIP. Ms. Oosterveen said she was not aware of any. She added that the proposed TIP is one of the smallest brought forward in recent years.

Chair Simas said he could see the advantage to having all doors open to every possibility makes perfect sense.

A motion to recommend to the City Council adoption of the 2014-2019 Transportation Improvement Program as proposed, and the associated transmittal memo, was made by Commissioner Glass. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and it carried unanimously.

B. 2013-2024 Transportation Facilities Plan Environmental Analysis

Senior Transportation Planner Mike Ingram informed the Commissioners that the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement remains open, though no comments have yet been received. The comment period will close on May 13.

Mr. Ingram explained that under the state legal framework an environmental analysis of the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) is required in that it meets the threshold requirements for proposed actions. Traditionally the 12-year horizon for transportation conditions is reviewed, the level of forecasted growth is factored in, and the results are modeled to determine the cumulative environment effects. The city has a six-year BKR model used for determining concurrency, a 12-year model for the TFP, and 20-year models for long-range planning.

Mr. Ingram said staff anticipate finalizing the environmental analysis early in June at which point it will be possible to move forward with having the Commission recommend adoption to the City Council.

The environmental analysis considered two alternatives. The no action alternative was based on the transportation network already in place together with funded projects in the pipeline. The action alternative included the additional projects that are in the TFP for implementation in the out years. In addition, a scenario that included the link of NE 15th Street between 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE was added to the model as a what if.

The analysis looked at transportation, air quality, noise, land use and aesthetics, and the natural environment. The transportation analysis looked at overall traffic volumes and the area-wide level of service. In terms of overall traffic volumes, not a lot of difference was noted between the two alternatives given the plans in place for the Wilburton and Bel-Red areas. Some difference is noted, however, when the NE 15th Street link is added given the more direct connection it creates between the downtown and the Bel-Red corridor.

Mr. Ingram noted that adding an HOV lane southbound on Bellevue Way increases traffic volumes on the link by about 600 during the evening peak. During the evening peak there is pressure on all southbound routes, and to the extent the size of the pipe is increased on one of the routes increased volumes will result. The analysis done regarding Bellevue Way and shared recently with the Council showed the HOV lanes would offer some benefit to the corridor. The Council, however, chose not to pursue the light rail cost saving measure that would have incorporated the HOV lane. If the HOV lane is to be created, it will be up to the city to fund it.

With regard to the area-wide level of service, Mr. Ingram said 12 of the city's 14 Mobility Management Areas are forecast to be in compliance at the 2024 horizon, and two, Wilburton and Newcastle, are forecast to be out of compliance. It is not unusual, however, for some MMAs to be out of compliance in a given TFP cycle; often as conditions change during the next cycle those previously out of compliance are no longer out of compliance. In the current analysis, however, the Wilburton and Newcastle MMAs being out of compliance may be somewhat more significant. Mr. Nurse addressed the Wilburton MMA, which is sandwiched between the downtown and Bel-Red corridor. Both of those major activity areas have area-wide LOS standards of 0.95, but Wilburton has a standard of 0.90. The Wilburton MMA is home to many of the freeway access points which tend to be congested, and that is the thinking behind the suggestion of staff to take another look at the standard for the Wilburton MMA. The analysis for the TFP for the 2024 horizon shows that the 0.90 standard would be exceeded under all three scenarios.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the MMAs shown as out of compliance are tied to the 0.90 standard for Wilburton. Mr. Ingram said they are not directly related. There are two ways the standard can be violated, by having the average level of service for the intersections within a given MMA above the standard, and by having more than the allowed number of intersections in the MMA that are individually allowed to exceed the standard.

Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller clarified that the staff have not yet made a formal recommendation to change the LOS standard for Wilburton from 0.90 to 0.95. He said that is just one of the things that could be done to address the issue if it comes to pass.

The other options are to deny building permits and thus limit development, and to construct additional capacity. Mr. Ingram pointed out that the concurrency horizon of 2019, which is used to determine whether or not development should be permitted, still shows the Wilburton MMA to be in compliance with the standard; it is only in the out years where the challenges exist. He stressed that things may play out differently in the next TFP update given updates to the traffic model and projected development.

Chair Simas asked what the ramifications be of going to 0.85 and what would the solutions be. Mr. Ingram said to obtain a better intersection level of service it is necessary either to reduce traffic volumes or increase capacity. Traffic reductions could be achieved by adding new links, thus spreading traffic out across a finer grain. The approach would cost a lot of money. Mr. Miller added that once the NE 4th Street extension is opened the traffic dispersion in the Wilburton MMA will be different. Completion of the NE 6th Street extension will have impacts as well. No proposals have been put forward to go with an LOS standard of 0.85.

With regard to the Newcastle MMA, Mr. Ingram said there are six designated system intersections, only three of which are currently signalized and used in making the calculations. All three intersections are stressed during the peak hour and as projected the area-wide LOS calculates out to be in excess of 1.0. No capital improvements for any of the three intersections are identified in the TFP. The area-wide LOS calculation for the MMA could be improved by signalizing one or more of the three unsignalized designated system intersections.

Mr. Ingram said the ped/bike system projects were also covered by the environmental review. He noted that the ped/bike plan that was adopted in 2009 identifies a pedestrian system and a bicycle system. There is a policy target to complete 25 miles of arterial sidewalks by 2019. Under the no action alternative, only about 25 percent of that goal would be met, whereas under the action alternatives about a third of the goal would be met.

There are five east-west priority bicycle corridors identified in the ped/bike plan, and six north-south corridors. The policy direction is to complete two east-west and two north-south corridors by 2019. The Northrup Way project will complete a significant portion of the SR-520 trail project; the rest of the trail will be built out as part of the WSDOT project that is currently under way. To make more progress on the east-west corridors would require pursuing the Mountains to Sound Greenway; there is design money in the TFP but nothing for construction. With regard to the north-south corridors, progress is being made on the West Lake Sammamish Parkway connection. The Lake Washington loop trail is about 69 percent complete; the 108th Avenue NE/112th Avenue NE project north of the downtown will complete the loop, but it is in the TFP only for initial design and some scoping.

Mr. Ingram said the environmental review included a look at air quality. The most congested intersections where there is the most traffic and the most delay were studied relative to carbon monoxide levels. It was found that none of the intersections exceed the limits. Bellevue is also consistent with the Puget Sound Regional Council regional framework for air quality. The no action and action alternatives show no significant difference in terms of vehicle miles traveled, a key measure for determining greenhouse gas emissions. Meeting the city's goal for

reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will require something close to the “aggressive scenario” identified by the Puget Sound Regional Council Transportation 2040 Plan.

The noise analysis was focused on locations that are proximate to residential areas and it was found that the impacts are essentially the same under the alternatives. The city has no noise standard that must be met, though there is some policy language about conditions under which some mitigation might be appropriate.

Mr. Ingram said the projects having the largest impact on land use aesthetics are those that create new road links or which realign existing roads. In many cases structures are removed or parking is impacted, and landscaping is disrupted.

The natural environment analysis focuses on conditions at locations where projects are planned. The analysis looks at steep slopes such as those along NE 4th Street and adjacent to Bellevue Way where the HOV lane would be cut in; places where there are potential liquefaction zones; projects that may impact wetlands buffers; projects in shoreline areas, which includes the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project; projects that involve stream crossings; and projects that may impact wildlife or vegetation. In all cases where additional impervious surfaces are created, there are implications.

Mr. Ingram acknowledged that the Bellevue Way HOV lane project is included in the draft TFP project list. There is some uncertainty with regard to the position the Council will take on that project. The Council could determine the project is not needed, or it may direct staff to scale it back to some degree. The Council may also want to know if the Commission has additional projects it would like to see included.

Answering a question asked by Chair Simas regarding the Bellevue Way HOV project, Mr. Miller allowed that it has been political from the moment it was first hypothesized. He said staff would be more prepared to talk about the pros and cons and alternatives of the project at the June meeting of the Commission. The project is not included in the no action alternative or in the CIP, but it is included in the action alternative. The analysis done to date does show some traffic benefit to having the HOV lane, but whether or not the benefit is justified by the cost is debatable, especially now that the City Council and Sound Transit have made it clear they will not be partnering on the project.

Commissioner Glass noted that the TFP is a financially constrained document and he asked if keeping the Bellevue Way HOV lane project on the list would create difficulties by preventing the city from pursuing other projects more fully. Mr. Miller said the project will absolutely have an impact by taking up some \$20 million. Additionally, the impact fee program is based on the capacity projects that are shown to be funded in the 12-year TFP, so as things stand the HOV project is included in the impact fee calculations; eliminating the project and assigning the dollars to non-capacity projects will have a direct correlation to the impact fee equation.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Mr. Miller said there is approximately a \$30 million funding gap associated with the NE 15th Street project, and he allowed that the

\$20 million earmarked for the Bellevue Way HOV lane project would go a long way toward filling that gap. A local improvement district is one way to help close the gap.

Commissioner Glass said he favors adding a lane to Bellevue Way and would like to see the project at least proceed along some level of design and analysis. However, because it is evident the project will not happen in the near term, it would make sense to scale it back and put the dollars toward other projects.

Chair Simas concurred and suggested the Commission should go so far as to suggest some alternatives.

Mr. Miller said there has been a lot of input to the city lately about investing in Newport Way in the annexation area. There is a community center and a library there, as well as schools, that lack good connections for pedestrians and bicyclists. That is one project that could benefit from having dollars allocated to it in the TFP. There are in fact needs evident throughout the city. He agreed to come back to the Commission with a list of ideas and options.

Mr. Ingram said the Commission would be asked to finalize its recommendation to the Council in June.

C. Downtown Transportation Plan Update: Transit Passenger Comfort, Access and Information

Mr. McDonald provided the Commissioners with the updated modeling results from Dynamic, which included having transit-embedded in the modeling assumptions. He noted that the trajectory of measured transit trips and the projections to 2030 is a steady climb upward. He noted that in the materials previously supplied to the Commission was the 2012 number of boardings, alightings and transfers totaling 17,700. To make it equitable across the spectrum, the number has been reduced to account for boardings and alightings only, resulting in a slight decrease in the percentage increase from 2010 to 2012. Citywide ridership growth numbers between 2003 and 2012 were also shared with the Commissioners, and Mr. McDonald noted that the modeling projections were not far off of actual measured conditions.

Mr. McDonald allowed that the Commission previously questioned the rate of transit growth and whether or not it has occurred anywhere else. Mr. McDonald said staff could find no urban center-to-urban center direct comparisons, but what was found was a rollup of commuting via transit information that comes from the American Communities Survey by metropolitan statistical area regarding the years 2006 to 2008. He noted that the Seattle, Tacoma and Bellevue area increase in commuting by transit during those years at 13.4 percent was on the low end of transit commute trip growth among other peer jurisdictions.

The Commissioners were shown data regarding the number of vehicle trips between 2000 and 2010 that crossed the downtown screenline consisting of 100th Avenue NE, 112th Avenue NE and Main Street in either direction. In 2000 there were 174,000 such vehicles, including carpools, vanpools and transit, and in 2010 the number of vehicles measured was slightly

lower. Mr. McDonald said the decrease is interesting in light of the fact that between 2000 and 2010 the growth in the Downtown was substantial. The data regarding actual vehicle counts along arterials between 1991 and 2010 have in fact remained relatively steady while transit ridership increased.

Mr. McDonald said the assumptions that went into the Dynamic transit model included the BKR origin, destination, land use and trip distribution data; the transit routes and headway data according to the East Link transit integration plan; the fact that each bus stops at each existing stop, that all stops are in lane, and that each stop averages 15 to 30 seconds. He shared with the Commissioners charts indicating the modeling results with transit embedded.

Mr. McDonald highlighted the intersection of NE 4th Street and 112th Avenue NE where the modeling showed 109 seconds of delay under the build scenario. He noted that eastbound NE 4th Street is highly congested, the result of which is that not many cars can be squeezed through. The same is true of northbound 112th Avenue NE to eastbound NE 4th Street. The congestion is triggered by capacity issues on I-405. There are other intersections with delays of about 70 seconds and attention will be given to them to see if any fixes could be affected.

With regard to passenger comfort, access and information, Mr. McDonald said the comments from the community focused on issues related to wayfinding, the need for good pedestrian and bicycle access to the transit system, and a reasonably secure place to park bicycles if they are not going to be taken on the bus. In December the Commission added the thoughts that transit stops could have sponsorships, that wi-fi could be improved, that restroom availability is a key issue, and making sure there is shelter for those waiting for transit. The Commission also highlighted the need for good electronic information so riders can know when the next bus will be arriving, and the need for safety. All of those comments have been factored into the analysis of passenger comfort, access and information. Four transit stop typologies have been distilled, and specific components have been recommended to be part of each typology. The four typologies -- local transit stop, primary transit stop, frequent transit network/RapidRide station, and transit center/multimodal hub -- were largely derived from the existing transit master plan but also from agency planning and standards adopted by Sound Transit and King County Metro.

The transit stop is a basic interface between the sidewalk and the bus. The local transit stop is probably on its way out as a typology in the downtown because of the number of boardings. Such stops are generally served by only one transit line with less than 30 boardings per day, and there are very few of those left in the downtown. Primary transit stops have more passengers and are served by one or more transit lines having relatively frequent levels of service. They have all the components of a local transit stop but also include shelter, transit wayfinding, real-time information displays and short-term bicycle parking. Frequent transit network/RapidRide station stops have all the bells and whistles of a primary transit stop but could also include an enclosed passenger shelter, Orca Card vending machines, off-board fare payment options, and transit transfer information and wayfinding. There would be only one transit center/multimodal hub serving multiple modes with all-day activities. In addition to the frequent transit network/RapidRide station amenities, it could include public restroom

facilities, and a bike station with long-term secured bike parking.

There are a number of ways to get the components wanted at transit stops. The transit agency or the city can make the investments, or the private sector could contribute either through an incentive to incorporate transit stops into buildings or through advertising and vending, which is done in downtown Seattle and in other major cities.

Commissioner Bishop said it did not appear to him as though the system could serve the 57,000 transit trips highlighted by Senior Transportation Planner Franz Loewenherz. Mr. McDonald said if all the bus boardings and alightings the model indicates for each bus stop, the total is likely to approximate the 57,000 total trips. He stressed, however, that the network being worked on by Mr. Loewenherz is different from the East Link integration plan and the two cannot be compared easily.

Mr. McDonald said prior to the June Commission meeting staff will be discussing the issue of on-street parking. He noted that the Council has given direction to look at the quantity of on-street parking as well as how it should be managed and whether or not to charge for it. Taxi and load zones as well as pick-up and drop-off locations will be considered as well. The Commission will then be asked to weigh in. Ultimately all of the strategies will be packaged and presented to the Council on September 23. The downtown transportation topic will cease to exist as a separate work plan item and will be fully integrated into the Downtown Livability Initiative. A comprehensive package of amendments to the Downtown Subarea Plan will be developed and forwarded to the Council for consideration in 2014.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Mr. McDonald said an environmental documentation will be developed, and if the threshold requiring an Environmental Impact Statement is crossed additional resources will need to be sought from the Council.

D. Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. McDonald said a number of community outreach efforts have been conducted as part of the process to update the city's Comprehensive Plan. The very successful forum involving the city's boards and commissions was part of that effort. The role of the Transportation Commission is to provide advice and recommendations to the Planning Commission, which has a stewardship responsibility over the entire Comprehensive Plan, including the Transportation Element and the various transportation facilities plans. During the course of the update the Transportation Commission will be updated and consulted monthly.

Mr. McDonald explained that Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan includes all of the basic elements, including the Housing Element, the Environmental Element and the Transportation Element. Given that the Comprehensive Plan was last updated comprehensively in 2004, much of the data and the policy language in the various elements are in need of updating to reflect existing conditions.

Multimodal levels of service will prove to be a significant work plan item for the Commission.

Currently the city is focused on measuring vehicle capacity expressed both as the volume-to-capacity ratio and vehicle delay. There is no focus at all on transit or ped/bike levels of service, and indeed those items are not measured. The update work will look at the best practices implemented by other urban centers for how to make those measurements and what to do with the metrics once they are in hand. The scope of work will stop short, however, of making a recommendation for change, but it will involve developing a policy basis for how to go forward to analyze multimodal levels of service. Driveway consolidation will also be discussed; where driveways are consolidated during redevelopment or CIP projects, there are fewer opportunities for conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists.

Commissioner Tanaka observed that focusing on driveway consolidation seems more specific than what is usually addressed in Comprehensive Plan policy language. Mr. McDonald said the topic did not come out of any of the community discussions but has been raised by transportation staff who would like to have policy language giving them more direction to require driveway consolidation. There is no other way to address the issue than through the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Commissioner Jokinen pointed out that the Kelsey Creek redevelopment utilized a single access point onto Main Street which has not turned out to be popular. It blocks traffic and is somewhat dangerous given how close it is located to 148th Avenue NE. Mr. McDonald commented that there will be no prescribed outcome to the driveway consolidation discussion.

Mr. McDonald explained that Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan contains what are called transportation facility plans, which are not to be confused with the Transportation Facilities Plan. There are a number of plans that are sort of relics of a past era in which transportation planning was done on a neighborhood scale rather than by subarea. Over the course of the last decade or so, efforts have been made to whittle away at the freestanding transportation facility plans by incorporating them into subarea plans. In 2004 the downtown transportation plan that is currently being updated assumed the transportation plans associated with the downtown into the Downtown Subarea Plan. That meant the original seven transportation facility plans were reduced by one to six. The Comprehensive Plan update effort will include consolidated the six remaining plans into a single transportation facility plan that can more easily be updated. The single plan will also be called something different to avoid confusion with the Transportation Facilities Plan.

Mr. McDonald said the Comprehensive Plan is specific about assigning levels of service to Mobility Management Areas. The policy direction is that the level of service is supposed to reflect the availability of alternative travel options and community goals that may be as important as managing congestion. More congestion can be allowed in some areas of the city under certain circumstances in return for a stronger transit emphasis, walking or other alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle, or where the impacts of wider streets are judged to be worse than the impacts of the congestion they are designed to solve. All of the criteria will need to be applied to the Wilburton Mobility Management Area in conjunction with reviewing the forecasted future land uses and vision for the area before determining that a level of service change is warranted.

Commissioner Glass pointed out that the Bel-Red and Wilburton plans are not very old. He suggested it would not make sense to change the LOS standard for either area so soon after the plans were created. There was a lot of public input involved in creating the plans and to make changes with a simple pen stroke would not be appropriate.

Commissioner Bishop said he was not opposed to at least discussing the possibility of changing the LOS standard for Wilburton.

Chair Simas commented that NE 8th Street is the backbone of the Wilburton MMA and added that if it does not flow, nothing will flow. He said he could see the argument in favor of keeping the standard where it is. He allowed, however, that he was willing to hear arguments on both sides before reaching a final conclusion.

9. OLD BUSINESS - None

10. NEW BUSINESS

There was consensus among the Commissioners that the annual retreat should be scheduled. The topics mentioned for possible discussion included the overall financing of transportation projects, a review of the accomplishments of the last year, the philosophy, vision and role of the Commission, and freeway tolling and hot lanes. July 11 and 25 were highlighted as possible dates for the retreat.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bruce Nurse with Kemper Development Company, 575 Bellevue Square, commented that he regularly commutes by bicycle. With regard to the level of service topic, he noted that the city of Kirkland elected to establish 1.0 as the standard for their downtown area. The result is that there is a great deal of congestion there and the cars move slower than pedestrians. He also commented that at Pike Place Market in Seattle on a Saturday there are so many pedestrians that vehicles can hardly make any progress at all. Congestion in the downtown is not as high as in those two locations.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 11, 2013

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Glass and it carried unanimously.

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

The Commission reviewed the calendar of upcoming events and agenda items.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Before adjourning, Chair Simas recognized Commissioner Glass for his eight years of service to the city as a member of the Commission. He was asked to join the Commission at the upcoming retreat so his service can be formally recognized.

Chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 10:02 p.m.